REPORT OF THE MEETING OF
32ND SMALL BRANCHES CONFERENCE

First Plenary Session
"Ensuring Adequate Parliamentary Scrutiny of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs"

&

Second Plenary Session
"The Impact of the Informal Economy on Economic Diversification in Small States"

09TH SEPTEMBER 2012

Venue: GALADARI

Prepared by
HANSARD DEPARTMENT
Parliament of Sri Lanka
Hon. Jacquie Petrusma (Tasmania) - Chairperson
Senator Velma Newton (Barbados) - Discussion Leader
Hon. David Agius (Malta) - Discussion Leader
Senator Ian Gorst (Jersey) - Discussion Leader

Rapporteur - Mr. I.L.A. Jabbar (Sri Lanka)

The Chairperson, Hon. Jacqueline Petrusma, MLC (Tasmania) warmly welcomed the delegation present and gave a brief introduction of how the Session would progress. She invited the delegates to take part in the day’s proceedings in an interactive manner. She made a lengthy introduction of the first Discussion Leader, Senator, Hon. Velma Newton from Barbados and invited her to make her presentation.

Senator Velma Newton (Barbados), Discussion Leader commencing her presentation stated that in today’s world, national policy was constantly being influenced and determined by global issues, the decisions of international institutions and for small States, by actions of super powers. Yet, in many Commonwealth countries, most Parliamentarians are often poorly or not at all informed of activities and decisions taken by their governments in relation to foreign affairs, and therefore they have no opportunity to influence on the decisions which affect the citizens whom they represent, she added.

She further stated that in larger Commonwealth countries, there were committees like Parliamentary Committees on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (Australia), Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada) and Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Commons (UK) and similar bodies that exist. She added that those countries had resources both in terms of manpower, expertise and finance to provide services needed for those committees to function. She pointed out that these Committees can commission research, publish reports and enable Members to speak authoritatively in Parliament on varied aspects of foreign policy and foreign trade. She stated that in the Commonwealth Caribbean, in contrast, the tradition is for the Executive or the successor to the prerogative powers of the Crown, to conduct foreign affairs, defence and international trade matters and subscribe to international treaties on behalf of the State, without the approval, or indeed, the knowledge of Parliaments and without the production of documentary authority or full powers. In support, she stated that she had been an independent Senator in Barbados for 12 years and during her tenure, no general debate on the country’s foreign policy or international trade objectives had taken place and added that only a few foreign affairs matters came to Parliament and there was no Parliamentary Committee to deal with foreign affairs. She pointed out that the situation in other Commonwealth Caribbean countries were more or less the same.
She explained how about a decade ago, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Barbados, Dame Billie Miller, instituted a bipartisan Foreign Policy Committee, which included members from both Houses of Parliament and other segments of society. She said it seldom met due to lack of quorum and that members of the civil society attended but the Parliamentarians did not turn up. She added that this was replaced by a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade when a new Minister for Foreign Affairs was appointed in 2006 and it had several vague terms of reference. She read out a list of terms of reference of this Committee. She pointed out due to poor attendance and lack of interest on the part of the Members of Parliament, it also faded into oblivion. She posed the question, as to why there is lack of interest from the Parliamentarians and gave a number of possible reasons.

She then pointed out the current position with regard to treaties, which was the same as for foreign affairs and was exemplified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969, which identified Heads of State and Ministers of Foreign Affairs as representatives of their respective States for the purpose of performing all acts relating to the conclusion of treaties. She explained that in many democracies outside the Commonwealth, permission to conclude treaties was usually given to the officials, but subject to constitutional provisions guaranteeing legislative participation.

She pointed out that in the Constitutions of the twelve independent Caribbean States, the concept of legislative participation is not a permanent feature. She cited several examples from her region. She further stated that in her region in general, treaty making is regulated by the rules of common law and there is no requirement that treaty conclusions must be subjected to approval of Parliament. That was, except in Antigua and Barbuda, which passed a ratification in 1987 legislating a rule for Parliament approval in treaty control. She explained the Ratification of Treaties Act in length.

Then she dealt with recommendations for Parliamentary scrutiny of foreign affairs in the Caribbean Commonwealth. She suggested to establish Committees of Parliament as was done in Barbados in 2002 and then in 2006 and she also elaborated a number of possible constraints on small nations to have such Committees. Another suggestion was an annual debate on the subject of foreign affairs. The third suggestion was to pass a piece of legislation similar to the Antigua Ratification of Treaties Act for the rest of the region. She was of the view that it would provide an opportunity for Members of Parliament to debate general foreign policy issues and have a say in treaty ratification. She added that in countries where Parliamentary debates are broadcast on television and radio it would provide an opportunity for citizens interested in foreign affairs to be updated on the developments. In her view fostering public debate that impacts on Parliamentary discussion of treaty ratification will be the way forward.

She was of the view that the most important thing was an amendment to Caribbean Commonwealth Constitutions to entrench the principle of Parliamentary participation in foreign affairs and treaty making. She added that the amendment could require a two-thirds majority but the failure to achieve such majority could be an obstacle to the efficient management of country's affairs.
In conclusion, she stated that according to Barbados experience, in terms of small States, the establishment of Parliamentary Committees to discuss and report to Parliament on foreign affairs on an on-going basis was not the way forward to ensure greater Parliamentary scrutiny. She suggested that the preparation of reports on the work of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and to lay annual reports in Parliament and this be followed by a debate where each Member speaks and also the adoption of provisions similar to the Ratification of Treaties Act of Antigua and Barbuda could go a long way. This would be an important step in the development of the Caribbean region’s response to the challenge of providing greater participation of Parliaments in the formation of international law. She was of the view that the best way forward would be for the States in the region to amend their Constitutions, to provide for treaty ratification by specified majorities, rather than by ordinary majority and to use ROTA as the base from which to start formulating provisions to ensure meaningful participation by Parliament.

The Chairperson then gave an introduction of the next Discussion Leader, Hon. David Agius from Malta, and invited him to make his representation.

The Hon. David Agius (Malta), Discussion Leader, commenced his presentation by quoting the great English poet, John Donne. He stated that the great 17th century English poet, John Donne, who incidentally also served in the UK Parliament between 1601 and 1614, once wrote: “No man is an island, entire of itself”. Not even islands are islands anymore, he stated. He pointed out that with today's social networks and ratifications, this is very true and one cannot live on the upper floor thinking that life revolves only around one’s own country, around one’s own village and one’s own constituency.

Furthermore, he stated that the role of Parliaments in international relations was a must, which dictates that the representatives of the people should be involved. He pointed out that international affairs play an important role in any system of governance and decisions taken at international bodies influence the lives of many. He explained how Parliamentary scrutiny has become even more important in the present context. He stated that globalization increased the role and competence of international politics, in which ambit, policy-making shifts from the national to the international level, making parliamentary involvement all the more relevant and necessary at this juncture. Therefore, he stated that it is imperative that national legislative bodies continue to undertake the thrust of parliamentary scrutiny of foreign affairs.

He further stated that international affairs, particularly international bodies, such as the Commonwealth, played an increasingly important role in the system of governance and their influence over national policies had been constantly and most consistently growing. He suggested the following recommendations:

- Regular debates discussing activities of international institutions, particularly those activities directly relevant to national affairs, and reports submitted by the government.
- Shadowing and participant observation of debates so as to learn from each other thus disseminating good practices and procedures.
• Setting up of committees/sub-committees in national parliaments responsible for the follow-up of the government’s international activities and for making recommendations.

• Ensuring that international affairs and activities related thereto are kept high on the national agenda with a view to help citizens understand the relevance of such undertakings.

• Including parliamentarians from the varied political spectrum represented in the House in national delegations participating in meetings of international institutions.

• Reserving seats for parliamentarians of both ruling and opposition parties in Commonwealth Assemblies as well as conference and meetings organized in its framework.

• A greater involvement of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in the activities of the Commonwealth, particularly where input is required for the organization of agendas and conclusions of important meetings such as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

• Reinforced scrutiny procedures, whilst simultaneously organizing seminars to discuss the use of comparative methods for exchange of ideas and best practices.

• A broader dissemination of documentation relevant to international events in the world of foreign affairs, in advance of, as opposed to, following an international meeting. One such example would be the Climate Change Summit, which is particularly relevant to small countries most notably to islands states.

• Greater openness to include the involvement of civil society through NGOs, the media, and the general public, particularly through the use of the internet.

Finally he emphasized that his aim was to concentrate on a few issues that matter to them - the small States - and he invited the delegates to consider these recommendations with regard to Parliamentary scrutiny of foreign affairs.

Then, the Chairperson gave a lengthy introduction of the next Discussion Leader, Senator Ian Gorst from Jersey and invited him to make his presentation.

**Senator Ian Gorst (Jersey), Discussion Leader**, making his presentation stated that the CPA is a valuable forum for exchange of ideas particularly because of its great diversity and pointed out that one of the issues that is common to all the Commonwealth countries is their commitment to democracy. He referred to the theme of the Session “Ensuring adequate Parliamentary scrutiny of Commonwealth and foreign affairs” and raised the question, "How do we ensure that it takes place?" He said that it was very difficult to maintain adequate Parliamentary scrutiny of foreign affairs as it was such a tricky area of government due to a number of reasons.

He further stated that despite 800 years of autonomy in a wide range of areas, Jersey only recently acquired a greater degree of independence regarding its external relations when the
States of Jersey Law was adopted in 2005. He pointed out that they are relatively new to the complexities of foreign affairs and that is why they are keen to discuss and learn from the other delegates present. He focused his attention on three key questions concerning parliamentary scrutiny of foreign affairs. He questioned about the areas of foreign affairs that Parliaments would wish to scrutinize, whether there was a way that it could be done better and whether there was a way to work more in parallel as issues and policies developed? Parliaments’ scrutiny of foreign affairs generally tended to concentrate on policy, administration and expenditure, he added.

He explained a number of reasons that would make parliamentary scrutiny of foreign affairs a complex issue. He further stated that foreign affairs is often considered to be a matter dealt with by Ministers, without the involvement of Parliament and this perceived lack of involvement could be a failure by Parliament to fulfil one of its vital roles of scrutinizing the actions of Ministers and holding governments accountable. He referred to the issue of bringing in multinational organizations to scrutinize foreign policy, which has become a common feature today. He brought to light the challenges posed by this issue. He suggested that these challenges could be met if they develop an inter-Parliamentary scrutiny policy, drawing in Members from different relevant Parliaments. He reminded the delegates that they already have an effective framework against which they could judge whether or not a Parliament is ensuring adequate scrutiny over foreign affairs and suggested that the Inter-Parliamentary Union could provide them with a toolkit for self-assessment, including a whole section on Parliamentary involvement in foreign affairs.

He was of the view that each government had its own way of tackling this question. According to him in Jersey, just as elsewhere in the Commonwealth, the main forms of Parliamentary scrutiny were direct oversight from Parliament itself, in the form of questions from elected representatives and the ratification of international agreements and the more structured scrutiny process conducted by panels and committees such as the UK’s Foreign Affairs Select Committee or in Jersey’s case, the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel. He was of the view that working in partnerships is one way to ensure that adequate scrutiny takes place. He explained the steps they have taken in this regard.

He stressed the need of active engagement with other governments for the purpose of economic globalization. He said he would be interested to hear the views of the other delegates on scrutiny of foreign affairs. He stressed the importance of taking up this topic at the CPA and suggested that having an annual debate on the opportunities for Inter-Parliamentary scrutiny of foreign affairs could be helpful. He added that it had to be a shared goal of all Commonwealth Members of Parliament to ensure that the Commonwealth remains a relevant global organization in the years to come. In his concluding remarks, he stated that he would fully support the proposals of reform and expressed his hope that the CPA would be a forum to discuss the key issues that affect all Commonwealth countries.

At the end of the presentations of the Discussion Leaders, the Chairperson, invited the Delegates to ask questions, limiting the time allotted to three minutes each.
The Hon. (Ms.) Lovitta F. Foggo (Bermuda) asked about the measures that could be adopted in respect of dependent territories which would allow them and encourage input from the Parliamentarians and the wider civil society, without breaking or violating any entrustments such countries were enjoying under their specific constitutions.

Senator Ian Gorst replied saying that that was one of the questions that they were struggling with to solve in Jersey since they also had areas of entrustments. He explained that as per the role that the UK Government placed on them in foreign affairs and what they are now entrusted with in regard to treaties and developing their own international personality, it made it even more complicated for the national Parliament of Jersey, which was scrutinizing and trying to make a difference. He further stated that there was no friction with the United Kingdom Government, but they were trying to develop further entrustments and trying to improve their international personality as well. He further stated that it was a matter of communication of what the situation legally was and the constitutional relationship. He added that the biggest concrete action was to be completely open and have good communications with your own Parliament.

Senator Velma Newton in this regard asked whether it was usual for the UK to send an explanatory memorandum to the dependent territories with legislations that affect them. The Hon. (Ms.) Lovitta F. Foggo, replied in the affirmative to this question. When asked whether they would debate such a thing, the Hon. (Ms.) Lovitta F. Foggo replied saying that it would happen if the Government chooses to put it down and explained such a situation in detail.

Senator Ian Gorst in relation to the question raised by the Hon. (Ms.) Lovitta F. Foggo, pointed out that the Jersey law explicitly required the Government to have a debate in Parliament about any proposed extension clauses or agreement, and they found it quite useful.

The Hon. Wilkie Rasmussen (Cook Islands) questioned as to how they could overcome the authority vested in the Executive Council of a country or its Cabinet in making decisions by itself, without having to come back to Parliament for consultation.

The Hon. David Agius, in response to that question stated that they treat Parliament as an autonomous body and that a Government could have particular lines of thoughts whilst Parliament could have different lines of thoughts.

Senator Ian Gorst replying to the same question stated that in Jersey, they have moved from a Committee form of government to a Ministerial form of government where they have now formed a Council of Ministers who perform the executive role largely.

Senator Velma Newton also making a remark on the same question referred to the presentation she made earlier where she suggested an amendment to the Constitutions to ensure that treaties receive Parliament ratification before they are entered into or for the countries in the Caribbean to follow the Antigua model and introduce a Ratification Act of Parliament. She further stated that in Barbados and Jamaica, before governments enter into agreements, the proposed agreements are discussed by the Attorney-General's Department and if experts in that Department were of the view that the Government should not go ahead or that they have reservations, that advice is usually given. But, it does not reach parliament, she pointed out. She strongly expressed the need for some mechanism to ensure that Parliamentarians, as people’s representatives, are involved in this discussion.
Senator Ian Gorst replying to it stated that they were small States negotiating with larger ones and there was always this feeling of them being on the back foot. He further stated that when they get a template agreement, the staff is more or less expected to agree to that without questioning. He discussed his experience in this regard where standard agreements were not quite standard as they were expected to be. He stated that this "small versus large" was a complicating factor and questioned how they could drag the scrutiny forward in the process.

Then, the Chairperson invited the Hon. (Dr.) David De Garis De Lisle from Guernsey to ask his question.

The Hon. (Dr.) David De Garis De Lisle (Guernsey) stated that the Islands of Guernsey and Jersy worked with the UK in terms of foreign policy and international trade. He also stated that with the development of regulations of the finance industry, there had been a lot more interests from the EU and the UK in terms of developing international personality within the islands and providing more dialogues with respect to international representation. He questioned as what the domestic legislation that was introduced by Jersey in 2005 was aimed at and as to why it was brought in so late. He wanted to know what exactly is hoped to gain from this new law.

Senator Ian Gorst replying to his question, stated that he would send a copy of the said legislation to Dr. David since it is a lengthy document. He further stated that apart from the changes that happened in Guernsey, they too had things changed slightly - that was, moving from a committee system to a ministerial system. He also stated that accordingly Ministers started to perform executive functions and the move was neither too early nor too late. He added that one of the provisions in that law was that if there was to be an extension clause in the United Kingdom legislation, they, as an assembly had to explicitly approve that and at the same time and now they had a choice to do so or they could enact their domestic legislation.

The Hon. Robert Philip Braidwood (Isle of Man) inquired as to how Parliaments in small States were coping with the scrutiny of financial legislations and EU Code of Conduct on Taxation and also how they were complying with the templates of the OECD on Tax Information Exchange Agreements.

Senator Ian Gorst commenting on this point, stated that that was why in Parliaments right across the Commonwealth, scrutiny on foreign affairs is so critically important. He explained how the IMF and OECD made it obligatory on them to sign up international conventions and how those bodies put pressure on them and made them less economically nimble. In terms of Jersey, he stated that they tried to move themselves in the process rather than just being a body which sign those conventions and meet those requirements.

The Hon. John Hargreaves (Australia) making his comments said that a number of references were made regarding the contest of the sovereignty of jurisdiction between Parliament and the Executive and who has priority over the other and also over separation of powers. He asked the panelists their views on this issue. He stated that in Australia they had a lot of committees of scrutiny for bills and supportive legislations and according to the terms of reference they were tasked with examining treaties which had been proposed by the
Commonwealth. He stressed upon the fact that if they were going to impose something on the smaller jurisdictions, then they needed to have relevant parties at the conversation table.

**Senator Velma Newton** in response stated that she was in agreement with the fact that there should be a dialogue and involvement before ratification. She explained situations where hurried ratifications done by Parliaments. She was of the view that the involvement of Parliament only at the ratification stage is not sufficient.

**Senator Ian Gorst** stated that as most speakers pointed out, the involvement of Parliamentary ratification at the last stages appeared too late. He further stated that the Scrutiny Panel operating in Jersey was responsible for scrutinizing that area of Government policy and having in depth discussions and it was a good way to deal with this problem.

**The Hon. Sir Alan Kemakeza of Solomon Islands** raised the next issue. He stated that as per the Constitution of Solomon Islands, the Executive and Legislature were two separate bodies. The Executive could decide for themselves either on policy issues or conventional issues. He pointed out that they do have Parliamentary studying committees where NGOs and other stakeholders contribute, but he said that it was not mandatory for the government to follow their recommendations.

**The Hon. David Agius** commenting on this stated that in his Parliament there are a number of Committees represented by Members of both sides where they discuss issues. He also stated that in his country they had appointed an officer like an ombudsman who was answerable directly to Parliament and he was supposed to give his report to Parliament but not to the Government because the ombudsman was in a position to ask the Government to take particular decisions and justice done to a particular person in particular circumstances.

**Senator Velma Newton** stated that the remark made by Hon. David Agius was good but she found that there were practical difficulties. She explained experiences from her region in this regard.

**The Hon. David Agius** replying to what Senator Velma Newton, stated that even if there was a strong majority for the Government, still it had to respect the Opposition and even if there was one person representing the Opposition in Parliament, his voice should be recognized, he added.

**Senator Velma Newton** in response stated that she agreed with him and asked whether it was so in reality.

**Senator Ian Gorst** replying to the same question stated that it was difficult for him to comment on this issue since they had an Independent Member System. He added that even as the head of Government, he could not guarantee as to whether any decision that was taken by him would get the support of the legislature or not. He further stated that if you got a strong party system, it was important that the scrutiny takes place and the issues are raised and discussed. He pointed out that a ruling party with a majority will have its way and its decisions will succeed. But, he stressed that the important issue is that scrutiny takes place and the issues considered.
The Hon. Stanley W. Lowe from Bermuda the next questioned about the measures or mechanisms that could possibly be placed in terms of constitutional arrangements. He brought to light the fact that Bermuda happened to be Britain’s largest overseas territory. He explained about an extraordinary situation that Bermuda had to face about three years back, during the tenure of the then Premier, over an issue of transferring Uighurs from Guantanamo Bay to Bermuda. He pointed out that foreign affairs is a reserved power in Bermuda. He said still it is a matter that is being debated by the UK and US Governments. He further said that Bermuda was chided by the UK Government and the Queen’s Representative in Bermuda saying that the act was in contravention to the local law in Bermuda and the authority was vested with UK Government to decide over such an issue. He said even a Motion of No-Confidence was moved against the Government over this issue. He went into this issue at length giving details and wanted to know the Panel’s view regarding the issue.

Senator Ian Gorst replying to this question, stated that he hesitates to get drawn into that particular issue as to where reserved power starts and stops. He further stated that such big constitutional issues had to be negotiated not only with the UK Government but communicated and considered very carefully by the whole the community.

Senator Sarah Craig Ferguson (Jersey) posed the next question with regard to foreign policy. She stated that the UK had been signing treaties for them, the dependent territories. She further stated that there were about 14,000 treaties including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea which was said to be quite far-reaching. At the same time, she asked as to how those 14,000 laws should be taken into account since scrutiny of such a large number of laws were a pretty difficult task. Hence, she welcomed ideas from other branches and panel members on making scrutiny more effective. She also queried as to how large countries and international bodies were going to get more transnational work done and she remarked that if small branches like them stick together, they could have far more power than trying to fight separately. She also queried whether the various executives were of the view that they should follow the US model in this regard. She also wanted to know how the people undertake risk assessment of the collaterals that affect the well-being of a particular country when they suddenly got those treaties handed down to them from the UK or elsewhere. She welcomed ideas from the forum.

The Hon. David Agius in response to the questions asked by Senator Sarah Craig Ferguson, the stated that they had their officers in Parliament to prepare documents relating to a particular dialogue, a particular treaty or a topic. He further stated that they had working groups appointed within the main group and also committees so that they all could discuss matters and take decisions and make sure that they reach the citizens. He requested the other members to visit their website and study this.

Senator Velma Newton commenting on the same question, stated that it was important to have dialogues and maintain close contacts in that regard. She was of the view that larger countries have more resources than the small ones and a dialogue among them can resolve many problems. She further suggested to appoint committees and subcommittees to discuss the foreign affairs and to maintain close contacts with other dependencies.
The Hon. (Mrs.) Rereao Tetaake Eria (Kiribati) in her speech appreciated the work done by the CPA Conference and for having given them an opportunity to share viewpoints and the experiences of the members of the other Commonwealth countries. She appreciated what had been discussed and said that those have been very useful although they had very limited linking with the other territories. She thanked the CPA for inviting them and stated that they could listen to the experiences of the parliamentarians of large and small countries with regard to the common issues paving the way to have more closer contacts.

The Hon. David Claude Pierre (Seychelles) commenting on the subject matter of the Session stated that it was important to have capacity-building measures for Parliamentarians, bearing in mind, that elections are held on an every four or five-year basis. He asked from the Panel about the plans of the CPA in respect of the capacity-building measures for parliamentarians.

Senator Ian Gorst stated in response to the query raised by the Hon. David Claude Pierre from Seychelles that CPA had a far greater role to play in the discussion of these subjects which inevitably build capacity-building across parliaments which was a problem for all small jurisdictions. Training, familiarization with foreign policies, legal standing and constitutional relationships with each jurisdiction was important, he added. He also suggested to give more opportunities for the parliamentarians to have more interactions with other jurisdictions because it would help them in their capacity-building.

In response to the question posed by the Hon. David Claude Pierre from Seychelles, the Hon. David Agius stated that it was a matter of communication and cooperation amongst each and every Commonwealth country.

The Hon. Allister Hurrell Langlois (Guernsey), questioned as to what kind of advice could be given to parliamentarians of neighbouring countries in terms of maintaining cooperation and close relationships amongst them whilst maintaining proper independence and also satisfying popular opinion which was often quite hostile to the any other party.

The Hon. David Agius replied to that question by stating that they collaborated with each country in the spheres of development to find out the ways as to how they could deal with each other. He further stated that dialogue between countries was the best way to solve problems in countries.

Senator Ian Gorst replying to the question posed by Hon. Allister Hurrell Langlois stated that the premise of joint working and cooperation should be that each jurisdiction and State acted in their own interests so that neither party was going to be disappointed about the outcome. He was of the view that they must have more inter-parliamentary cooperation because they are small jurisdictions and have limited resources. They do have a diminished place at the table at international organizations by nature of their quantum and it was only by working together that they could get their voices heard, he added.
The Hon. Ellio A Solomon (Cayman Islands), commented on how Foreign and Commonwealth Office could act in respect of foreign affairs in the small States like theirs. He was of the view that they could share ideas and convey their concerns to find a solution to their problems.

Senator Velma Newton commenting further on the topic of the Session, the best way forward was involvement of the CPA to the extent of setting up a Committee comprising representatives of dependent territories where they could discuss common problems and make solutions particularly in relation to how they deal with the dominant partner. For that, there should be a closer discussion amongst the small States themselves, she added.

The Hon. David Agius stated that they could not influence on foreign affairs as they did not have all the resources that the larger countries had. He was of the opinion that CPA should have a committee comprising representatives of small states so that they could get together to get their voices heard.

Senator Velma Newton agreed with the Hon. David Agius and said that it was a good idea. She further stated that working collectively can come to some good conclusions.

Senator Ian Gorst stated that Foreign and Commonwealth Office was very important for small jurisdictions like them. He further stated that they need to have stable governments and stable economies and they wanted to show the world that they were competent in those areas. He added that in the foreign relation arena the international standards setting bodies could make decisions which would affect those two elements of their community today.

The Hon. John Hargreaves (ACT) stated that they solved their problems by getting all the jurisdictions together and created a working party which came up with an intergovernmental agreement.

The Hon. Haresh K. Budhrani (Gibraltar) commenting on the theme topic of the Session gave a brief description of the geographical background of their country. He stated that they enjoyed full responsibility in terms of their political and constitutional affairs except the subjects of defence and foreign affairs which was looked after by the UK Government. He further remarked that the UK Government looked after foreign relations in terms of United Nations obligations, commitments to OECD and the IMF. In addition, he stated that they were subjected to all aspects of EU life and law other than the common culture, policy and external tariff.

Then, he discussed about the issues relating to their immediate neighbour, Spain. He insisted on the fact that as far as the EU is concerned, they are subject to all the directives which come down from Brussels and they are required to enact all legislations by way of transposition of EU law. He stated that there is a degree of consultation between the foreign office and the government where EU matters are concerned. He further added that very recently, Spain was able to obtain the designation of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters as Spain is responsible for the protection of the environment. He further expressed his dissatisfaction over that situation and said that it is totally unacceptable to the people of Gibraltar and indeed to the British Government as well. He
said that this matter is now subject to litigation in the European Courts. He was of the view that although there is a degree of consultation, it is not institutionalized in any manner and there is no requirement of the Gibraltar Government to report to Parliament on these consultations.

He further stated that if Members of Parliament inquire about the consultations that have been entered into in the last three or six months between the British and the Spanish Government on EU matters at the Question time, he would allow it as the Speaker. But, he knew that even if they ask, the possible response would be that those are confidential and are on-going matters and he did not want to comment on it.

Then, the Hon. Budhrani mentioned about the dispute on sovereignty over Gibraltar between the British Government and Spain. At this stage, he expressed his dissatisfaction over the conduct of the British Government of its dealings with Spain and said that they wake up every single morning and keep a close eye and ear to the ground to find out what is happening. It was also mentioned that in the last few years, Gibraltar has reached a status whereby the British Government has ruled out that they would never enter into any bilateral negotiations with Spain on the sovereignty of Gibraltar without the agreement of the Government of Gibraltar and the consent of their people. He further stated that on all tripartite matters, the UK has allowed more freedom to Gibraltar.

Finally, the Hon. Budhrani pointed out the necessity of having a process whereby the Gibraltar Parliament can ask questions and to have a close scrutiny from the United Kingdom Foreign Office with regard to the matters concerning Gibraltar.

**The Hon. Stephen Charles Rodan (Isle of Man),** first of all professed his remarks by with regard to the procedure of the session itself and the shape of the panel. He stated that the issues raised with regard to Gibraltar and Tasmania displayed the pattern of questions and answers from the discussion leaders. He was of the view that the inclusion of questions from the Floor inhibited a free flow of ideas. Instead, he wished it to be changed to comments from the Floor. He was of the view that the job of the panel of experts was not to answer questions but to lead the discussion. He suggested that it was the best way of facilitating and stimulating the discussion.

During the course of his speech, he referred to the fact that half of the Members of Parliaments are from sovereign states and the balance half of them are from Parliaments of non-sovereign states and the subject matter “Ensuring Adequate Parliamentary Scrutiny of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs” which is under discussion, depends entirely on the constitutional positions of the states; whether they are Members of Parliament of sovereign States which perhaps will be the Members of the United Nations or not. He further stated that non-sovereign States do not have direct responsibilities for the conduct of commonwealth matters.

He said that he expected to see a logical place like a Select Committee or a Standing Committee to oversee the work of foreign relations because in the case of non-sovereign States like the Isle of Man, Jersey et cetera where there is no Foreign Ministry or foreign office, there should be a scrutiny mechanism different from the sovereign Parliament to determine how well they interact with government to government; with sovereign States such as United Kingdom or United States.
in terms of foreign affairs. He further stated that, for example, in the Isle of Man, there is an
External Relations Division in the Chief Secretary's Office which indeed overlooks the affairs of
parliamentary scrutiny and shadowing of the work of different departments.

Finally, he was of the view that any Member of Parliament, irrespective of his constitutional
status, is free to bring up any issue for debating, whether it is foreign affairs or not.

Then, the Hon. Dennis P. Lister (Bermuda) too reiterated the fact that the conduct of
the British Government in terms of foreign affairs of their countries was unsatisfactory. He
pointed out that although the Bermudian Government is responsible for their internal affairs, the
British Government retains the responsibility of their external affairs and hence they do not have
the choice of discussion on matters that have been passed down by the mother country with
regard to foreign affairs. Also, they do not have any say with regard to relationship with the EU
countries because the mother country takes decisions without consulting the non-sovereign
States under them, he added. Therefore, he insisted the necessity of consulting the overseas
territories on international negotiations affecting the territory.

(The Session Adjourned)
"THE IMPACT OF THE INFORMAL ECONOMY ON ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION IN SMALL STATES"

The Hon. Marlon Penn (British Virgin Islands), Discussion Leader, on the invitation of the Chairperson, made the first presentation. At the outset, he apologized for the absence of the Hon. Ronnie W. Skelton, Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the BVI and also thanked him for affording him the privilege to be part of the Panel as a first-time Parliamentarian, discussing the topic “The Impact of the Informal Economy on Economic Diversification in Small States”.

He thought it was appropriate to discuss the topic from a BVI perspective. It was very challenging for him to find empirical data on the topic as there was very little available, locally and regionally. Therefore, as an economist, he was forced to use local knowledge and grass-roots contacts to get information on the informal sector of his country's local economy and also to make a few assumptions on some areas. Finding a definitive definition for the subject - informal economy - was as equally difficult as finding information or data on that, he said. He quoted the definition of researcher Christina Becker, which states, “The term ‘informal economy’ thus refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are - in law or in practice - not covered or insufficiently covered by the formal arrangements” and further said that some economists and educators also recognize unregulated or illegal activity being conducted within an economy as part of the informal economy.

To ascertain the impact of the informal economy on economic diversification in the British Virgin Islands, he said that both unregulated and illegal elements and activities which make up the informal economy had to be looked at. Before defining the elements of the informal economy and coming to a conclusion on its impact on economic diversification of the formal economy, he wanted to lay out the BVI’s formal economy. Having a population of about 27,000, the British Virgin Islands mainly has a service-based economy with financial services and tourism as its two main pillars and a labour force of over 13,000 people, a per capita income of around US Dollars 38,500 and a GDP of just under US Dollars 1 billion as its main characteristics.

Then, he pointed out that two of the categories of the informal economy are: the unregulated legal activity, which has two main sectors contributing to the informal economy, one of which is tourism-related business and the other is the construction sector. Those two sectors make up the majority of the unregulated legal sector of the economy in the BVI.
Then, they have undocumented, illegal activity which has three main sectors that contribute. First is gambling, which, though prohibited in the BVI, is widespread due to the sale of lottery tickets in the neighbouring islands such as Puerto Rico and goes unchecked. It has proven lucrative and makes up a large portion of the informal economy. The second is prostitution and the third is, the sale and use of illicit drugs, which also contribute to the informal economy.

After an analysis of a combination of activities in the two sectors of the informal economy in the BVI, he had come to the following conclusion on the informal economy's impact on economic diversification: the impact of the informal economy on economic diversification in the British Virgin Islands is minimal at best, but it has an adverse effect on the local economy. The participation of the legal, undocumented sector of the informal economy represents a small segment of the formal economy and the persons involved tend to be at the lower end of the economic ladder making the minimum wage or below. It would not yield any revenue to the Central Government in the form of payroll taxes. Persons operating in the informal economic sector drive up the social cost to the Government because while they do not pay taxes, they benefit most from the programmes like free healthcare, social assistance and other social programmes. Moreover, the participation in the illegal, undocumented sector activities such as gambling adversely impacts on economic diversification and on the local economy. Sale of illegal lottery tickets exports money from the local economy and imports social problems. Those issues helped him to come to his conclusion that the informal economy has an adverse effect on economic diversification of the formal economy of the British Virgin Islands.

He said that a more coordinated effort for the collection of data on the informal economy is needed to understand its true impact on the formal economy as it would serve useful in the policy-making process, when making decisions on policy matters that fall within the informal sector of the economy.

Next, the Chairperson invited the Hon. Alistair Langlois, Discussion Leader, to make his presentation.

The Hon. Alistair Langlois (Guernsey) said that Guernsey, being an independent jurisdiction and a Crown dependency in the English Channel with 25 square miles and 63,000 people, has a successful economy dominated by financial services and is among the top finances in the world. He said they have a healthy economy and the employment opportunities are based on island contractors.

He quoted the definition of the informal economy given in the business dictionary as “A system of trade or economic exchange used outside state-controlled or money-based transactions. Practiced by most of the world’s population, it includes barter of goods and services, mutual self-help, odd jobs, street trading, and other such direct sale activities. Income generated by the informal economy is usually not recorded for taxation purposes and is often unavailable for inclusion in gross domestic product (GDP) computations.” He was of the view that every economy is not satisfying people’s expectations.

He pointed out that the informal economy comes to about 50 per cent of GDP or more in many developing countries and it is in the range of 15 to 20 per cent of GDP in the UK and France. It
helps to fill the gap of expectations. The informal economy undoubtedly meets some needs and that must be seen as an economic positive. The ILO and the OECD see a lack of social protection in insurance, resulting in a loss of tax revenues and irrational trust and confidence in the public sector. A democratic government deals with the taxation, social insurance, social spending on health, welfare and education. Many otherwise promising enterprises cannot expand due to bureaucratic regulations and restrictions. A thriving informal economy may feed diversity, especially if there are dominant sectors in the mainstream. That diversity is unlikely to develop longer-term prosperity without proper integration into the mainstream economy.

He said that the ILO, in 2001, stated that the fundamental challenge posed by the informal economy is, how to integrate it into the formal economy and that it is matter of expertise and social solidarity. Policies must encourage movement away from the informal economy and also expert groups in informal economy should be financed by organizations such as the ILO. He further stated that the informal economy creates chances of employment. The Government can challenge the informal economy by minimizing bureaucratic regulations. Guernsey does not have absolute poverty, but relative poverty because of people’s expectations. He said that human nature is such that many of them thrive through enterprise and hard work. Whether people are taking part in the informal economy or simply observing it, they come to see it as a failure of the Government. So, he was of the view that we must try to keep the informal economy in proportion and under control.

(At this stage, the Chairperson announced that any Delegate could ask questions).

The Hon. Philip Braidwood (Isle of Man) while thanking and congratulating the Discussion Leaders for their presentations, said that trading on eBay has become a great detriment to the economies of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man as those who are engaged in that do not pay tax and social security contributions, which in turn impacts on people who survive on social security handouts. The Isle of Man had reduced the tax on construction work to stop people from going to the informal black market to get their work done.

The Hon. Stephen Rodan (Isle of Man) was the next speaker. He began his speech by first thanking the Discussion Leaders for setting the backdrops so clearly for the discussion. He said that higher the tax and social security burden, the larger the informal economy in a country. Considering the good and bad of an informal economy, he said that those who are working outside the active economy could avoid taxes, social security payments and circumvent labour regulations and paperwork. On the other hand, for a government, it is a bad thing where it loses revenue from income tax and social security contributions, gets health and safety rules ignored and has inequality in competition. For small States in the state of developing, the situation is further complicated. He was of the view that if a government is truly concerned about the shadow economy; it should look very closely at how their own economic policies and structures are put in place to ensure there is a level playing field, true transparency and fair competition with regard to labour regulations, taxes and paperwork.

The Hon. Stanley W. Lowe (Bermuda) said that his country is one of the leaders in the financial services sector and at one time, was quite outstanding in tourism, with regard to which they had challenges and which had been overtaken by financial services now. With the
development of financial services, he said, the OECD is constantly asking for legislation and the
Government complies to stay off the blacklist and they have done reasonably well over the last
few years, implementing tiers. He also said that his country has come up with a new idea for
prostitution, which he thinks will always be illegal: Islamic financing. Recently, his Government
had passed a Referendum Act with which it intends to put the question of allowing gaming in
cruise ships anchored in Burmuda waters, creating additional financial resources for the running
of the country, out to the electorate to see what they think about it. He pointed out that Bermuda
has always been a low-tax jurisdiction. He hoped that the Government would be successful with
Islamic financial development.

The Hon. Marlon Penn while thanking the Hon. Lowe for his comments, said that the
British Virgin Islands also put in place anti money-laundering and tourism financing legislation,
on which the OECD was pressuring them to bring in legislation, as they were facing the same
challenges. He said the British Virgin Islands, where gaming is illegal, is boxed between the US
Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and St. Martin Island, which have legal gambling enterprises and
continue to put pressure on all locals of his country in terms of gambling. The sale of lottery
tickets from those territories sends hundreds and thousands of dollars out of BVI's economy. He
said that the idea of putting legislation in place for gaming in cruise ships anchored in their ports
was also put to them but, as politicians, they are opposed to that because of the society they live
in. But, he said that they are also really looking at it.

The Hon. Hamdun Abdulla Raheem (Maldives) stated that the incorporation or
integration of informal activities within an economy with formal activities in that should be
thought about. He also pointed out that, first of all, we have to clearly understand what kind of
informal activities are spreading in an economy. In some economies, there could be informal
activities like human trafficking, for example, for jobs in developed countries, which, though
informal, could, later on, when it comes to a formal level, generate a lot of money for a country.
It is difficult for people to find jobs in developed countries in order to support their families and
the economy, following a formal approach under the legislations. Informal activities cannot
contribute directly to the GDP and deprive States of income, but creates social costs. So, the only
way to integrate informal economic activities such as prostitution and gambling with the formal
economic activities is by legalizing those activities, he said.

Describing the economy of the Maldives, he said that they also faced the world economic crisis
in 2007/2008 period and their economy, which depends mostly on tourism and fishery exports,
started to shrink. As the IMF and the World Bank advised them to take measures to increase their
revenue, they resorted to changing the indirect taxation mechanism to a direct taxation
mechanism. Since the support given by the IMF and the World Bank was not enough, they also
borrowed from neighbouring countries like India, China and Sri Lanka.

Finally, he said that the target of the Maldives is to produce a healthy and productive person so
that he or she would contribute to the economy formally rather than in an informal way.

The Hon. Alistair Langlois thanked the Delegates for their contributions. He said that he
does not think anybody is advocating that moving illegal activities into the formal economy is a
very good thing. He was of the view that some fundamental standards still apply.
The Hon. Marlon Penn said that he does not advocate legalizing activities such as prostitution and gambling; evading taxes and social security is still illegal. He further said that as leaders and lawmakers, they cannot be hypocritical as well. If the activities are illegal, they have to either shut those down or have a discussion among themselves like in the instance of the proposal to allow gambling in cruise ships and put it to a referendum.

The Hon. Wilkie Rasmussen (Cook Islands) said that he wishes to raise a couple of matters that go beyond what everyone present understood to be an informal economy. He was of the view that there has always been a smart alec from the inception of human kind, who operates outside the normal rules and does something to gain advantage or some money because he or she can.

Speaking of the scenario of the informal economy that is much more specific to the Pacific islands, he said that some unemployed people of the remote communities, whose only income is through producing some sort of arts and crafts, do not take their produce to the formal market, but sell those to the buyers who come to them, in which process they do not pay taxes, but the buyers do. He stated that in the Cook Islands, they encourage those producers without chasing them for taxes because then those people could operate in the informal economy as that is their only source of income. So, he was of the view that even if those activities are illegal as they do not pay taxes, in some situations it is better to turn a blind eye to those activities and let them prosper. Therefore, even if there is illegality, they let them operate under a threshold of income, which does not get taxed.

Referring to the removal of levies on exports from small island countries in the Pacific, for example, by the European Union, he said that it enables the economy to function and compete. Those who pay taxes provide a form of subsidy to the people who do not have an income. That is how his Government looks at it, he said.

The Hon. (Dr.) David De Garis De Lisle (Guernsey) said that his question was based on the positive side of the informal economy and with regard to illegal gambling, prostitution et cetera. He stressed that economic diversification is very important to development in any society. He asked from the Panel how we should deal, for example, with competition from imported products and also with the problems in economic diversification and if anyone likes, in attracting the informal economy - access to credit, training, technologies and market information are needed to spearhead these developments - into the formal economy.

The Hon. Marlon Penn, in response to the Hon. De Lisle's question, said that proper data is not available to make decisions necessary to move forward and to assess the magnitude of the impact of the informal economy on the formal economy. So, the first step is to find out its true impact on the formal economy, whether it is negligible or significant to look at to put policies in place to manage it.

The Hon. (Dr.) David De Garis De Lisle questioned that if they are to spearhead economic development by diversification through the informal economy, how they could help access credit, training, technologies and market information needed to build those industries and then introduce them into the formal economy.
The Hon. Marlon Penn again responded by saying that in order to build the diversity needed, you have to have data and also a system in place to move those sectors forward. With regard to credit, he said that the Government of the British Virgin Islands has set up a small business bureau that links up with its national bank to help people with business ideas to develop business plans and strategies and help provide financing. In that, they concentrate on specific sectors within their economy where they do not have enough local presence and find ways to channel more of their local entrepreneurship.

The Hon. (Dr.) David De Garis De Lisle then posed the second part of his question again regarding home-made products being hit by competition from exported inferior products, and as to how you deal with that.

The Hon. Alistair Langlois said that we have to be very careful in using government action to serve in a protectionist way to fight against economic change. He was of the view that we should not refuse promoting diversification with necessary change. We can adopt training and education, cut down on regulations and help on the financial side, was his view.

The Hon. Gavin Short (Falkland Islands) first thanked the Discussion Leaders for their presentations. He said that the Falkland Islands is a small State with a population of about 3,000 and though there is some activity within its unofficial economy, it is at a low level.

The Hon. Ellio A. Solomon (Cayman Islands) also complimented all the previous speakers. He commented on the need to encourage those in the informal market as well and stated that as the Delegate from the Cook Islands said, it is extremely important to understand where they play a fundamental role in aiding the economy. He further said that he learnt a viable lesson after his visit to Jersey: that we have to do whatever we can to encourage persons who are trying to develop new products and services to come and develop those where we are. He was of the view that none of us could anticipate what is going to be around the corner, but that we could create the right free zone that allows new things to be developed as we do not know what the future, which is big, holds for us. The importance of the informal market must not be forgotten. The informal market is illegal, damaging and harmful to a country and the rest of the world and at the same time, it operates outside the taxation bracket. If we are not able to tax and measure it, it would be bad. He said that the Cayman Islands found it economically feasible to develop new products and did so for the departments for vehicle licensing and national identification.

The Hon. Marlon Penn said that recently he visited the Cayman Islands and had a look at its technologies, some of the things they have done in the sectors of immigration, labour and vehicle licensing. He further said that it is good to have innovation and creativity encouraged in those sectors. He pointed out that that is what they are also trying to do through their business bureau and the national bank, to create that kind of innovation and creativity within the economy. He was of the view that those types of new technologies and initiatives could come into the environment and that they could share with each other the lessons they learn and move forward together as territories.
The Chairperson also made a few comments on the situation in the Falkland Islands. She said that her country is tiny and a lot of people have more than one job. The Falkland Islands does not have input tax. She also said that the discussion had been interesting so far.

(At this Stage the Session was suspended for tea.)

(On Resumption)

The Chairperson invited comments or suggestions on the subject from the audience.

The Hon. James Gordon Reed (Jersey) was the first to avail of the opportunity. Commenting on the positive aspects of the informal economy, he said that it helps develop and prosper not only the country, but also its population. He further said that the informal economy plays a vital role in the sustenance and maintenance of the formal economy and recommended that they be regularized. He further stated that informal economy should be rewarded for their contribution towards the upliftment of the economy through measures like tax exemptions and tax holidays.

The Hon. (Dr.) David Claude Pierre (Seychelles) stated that due to globalization, a radical change had taken place in the production and distribution of many key industries through outsourcing and subcontracting. Commenting further on outsourcing and subcontracting, he said that this has resulted in the creation of a large number of low-paid jobs in the developing countries and an acute shortage of jobs in the developed countries. The Hon. David invited the Panel to comment further on his observation.

The Hon. Marlon Penn concurred with the observation made by the Hon. (Dr.) David that due to outsourcing and subcontracting, the developing nations are at advantage while the developed nations are at disadvantage. On the contrary, the Hon. Marlon noted that the developed nations benefit immensely through outsourcing since they obtain services for a meagre amount. However, he was of the view that the question of low-paid jobs created in abundance in the developing countries and the acute shortage of jobs in the developed nations should be looked into carefully and tackled effectively.

The Hon. (Dr.) David Claude Pierre pointed out that the developed nations are immensely benefited through informal economy and hence they should give it serious thought before venturing on to regulate the informal economy. He said that as a developed nation, they are spearheading the informal economies overseas and accepted that informal economies are beneficial particularly to women and they create, though low-paid, vast job opportunities.

The Hon. Marlon Penn contributing to the observation made by the Hon. (Dr.) David, said that every country should look into its needs and the impact of informal economy on them before making any arrangements to regulate that.

Senator Ian Joseph Gorst observed that the belief that informal economy is good would create a number of challenges for governments. He said that in the formal economy, governments offer reasonable thresholds for exemptions in their taxation system and provide for
social security for the greater good of the society. He further pointed out that if people resort to informal economy in order to make a living, governments then should have mechanisms operated within the formal economy to deal with that question.

The Hon. Marlon Penn commenting on the operation of the tax system said that governments can assist and ease the burden of the low-income earners by the creation of several tax slabs.

The Hon. Dennis P. Lister (Bermuda) said that human element should be considered vital in regulating the informal economy. He cited how people lost their jobs when informal businesses were regulated into formal businesses and said that it created not only an economic problem, but also a social problem. Therefore, he emphasized the need to be conscious about human element in trying to formalize or legalize the informal economy.

The Hon. Marlon Penn contributing to the observation made by the Hon. Dennis P. Lister said that governments should not close down informal economic activities without providing them alternate places and suggested that commercial zones be established for their smooth functioning. Since the informal economy employs a vast number of young people, the government is duty bound to encourage and protect the informal economy, the Hon. Marlon concluded.

The Hon. Allister Hurrell Langlois (Guernsey) agreed with the ideas put forward by the speakers that human factor and social security should be taken into consideration in regulating informal businesses.

The Hon. John Hargreaves (Australian Capital Territory) stated that micro and macro economy should be treated differently. He further argued that people resort to illegal activities and become victims of social isolation when their jobs are taken away. So, he advised the governments to be careful in handling this sensitive issue.

The Hon. Donte Hunt (Bermuda) commenting on the informal economy said that it should be viewed contextually and relatively and added that informal economic activities are thriving when unemployment is rampant. The Hon. Donte Hunt attributed greed and laziness of people as major factors that help sustenance and maintenance of informal economy and gave a detailed account to justify his position. Finally, he cautioned that the closure of informal economic activities would lead to more problems than solutions.

Since there were no questions or comments, the Hon. Allister Hurrell was first asked to summarize the Discussion.

The Hon. Allister Hurrell Langlois giving a summary of the whole Discussion said that it is important to find a balance between the two ends. He said that when informal economy flourishes, governments are forced to restrain their activities because of less inflow of revenue. He further added that the informal economy is based on entrepreneurship and works effectively with less regulations. The Hon. Allister Hurrell noted that people take to informal economic
activities due to numerous reasons and suggested that these activities be closely monitored and dealt with appropriately if it poses any hindrance to the smooth functioning of a government.

**The Hon. Marlon Penn** summarizing the Discussion stated that the challenges faced by the developed countries as well as the small States are the same. He stated that the economic crisis is engulfing the whole Globe and stressed that the closure of informal economic activities is not the only solution left. He said that irrational or hasty decisions should not be arrived at and recommended that a careful analysis be done on the informal economy, taking into consideration, actual facts and figures and its impact on the economy as a whole.

Winding up the Discussion, the Chairperson said that the contributions made at the Discussion were very interesting and innovative. She observed that a lot of people are engaged in the informal economy due to sheer needs and expectations. She pointed out that the extension of retirement age is the major factor which helps the informal economy to thrive and said that this aspect should be carefully considered when dealing with it.

Finally, she thanked the Discussion Leaders, the Presenters, the Participants and the Rapporteur, who contributed their utmost to make the Plenary Session a success.

*(The Session Adjourned)*